Women in the Military Negotiating Work and Family Conflicts While Reproducing Gender Inequality

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ABSTRACT: Through a qualitative study of military women who are mothers, this article examines decision-making processes mothers undergo while negotiating the competing devotions of work and family. Subjective experience and the women's individual life worlds are often overlooked in research on juggling work and family. The military and family are competing institutions (Segal 1986) and consequently, women confront contradictory expectations of the roles they play. This article addresses the following questions: What is the lived experience of the women interviewed in this study as mothers and soldiers? How do they negotiate the competing demands of work and family, and how do they justify not meeting the demands when compromise is necessary? These questions are important as this segment of the population is both growing and ignored. Research on women in the military as mothers is virtually nonexistent. The limited literature that does exist focuses on gender discrimination (Harris 2009) and ignores mothers all together.

KEYWORDS: Gender Inequality, work, family, women, mothers

Introduction

The change in the military over the last few decades has been to an all-volunteer force, with the inclusion of women who are mothers. Currently, the Department of Defense is debating whether to lift the ban on women in combat jobs, opening up new opportunities for women who serve. As more

and more women enter this male-dominated career field, it is important to begin to examine how they are negotiating these new roles and what their experiences are. The importance of this speaks to the changes in women's employment over the last forty years. The barriers women experience in employment are being broken down, however, there is still much to do. Many occupations are difficult, if not impossible, for women to break through the barriers. The military is not the only place that bars women from certain positions, either legally or socially. Further, the intense work-family conflicts military employment creates are not unique.

The military and the family are greedy institutions (Segal 1986). They elicit competing devotions and demand complete dedication. While this phenomenon is not unique to military personnel, the intensity and complexity of the demands strongly encompass the lives of female soldiers. Little research exists in the area of how women in the army negotiate the competing demands of work and family. While women in the military comprise only 15% of the services, their navigation between two greedy institutions is similar to many working women today. Furthermore, in the military, there are more men who are single parents than women, women are ten times as likely to be single parents as men (MacDermid and Southwell (2010).

Literature Review

Reproducing Gender Inequality

Literature on women in the military as mothers is virtually nonexistent. The thin literature that does exist focuses on gender discrimination (Harris 2009) and when work and family conflict are taken into consideration, it ignores military mothers all together. However, the military does not operate in a vacuum. Military changes have been brought about by changes in the larger society. Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as internal conflict resulting from the demands of competing roles that are incompatible (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Role theory posits that conflict occurs when an individual is engaged in multiple clashing roles (Katz and Kahn 1978). These roles are constructed by expectations of others in what is the normative behavior of the role. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) WFC can be time-based, strain-based, or behavior-based. Time-based conflict is a result of the conflicting roles making competing demands on the individual's time. Strain-based conflict arises when strain from one role hinders the effective performance

of the other role. Behavior-based conflict occurs when there are expectations of behavior in one role that is not appropriate in another. Time-based conflict is the most common and based on the scarcity hypothesis (Goode 1960). Blair-Loy (2003) strikes at the heart of the WFC when she defines it as the creation of the devotions dilemma.

Williams (2001) defined the ideal worker as unencumbered and committed to long arduous hours of work, with no outside limitations. As men and women make the choice to have children, while pursuing a career, they face different repercussions for their choices. When becoming a father, men gain in the appearance of warmth while keeping the perception of competence, however women gain in perceptions of warmth but lose competence (Harris 2009, Stevens et al. 2007). Further, the wage gap between mothers and non-mothers is greater than the wage gap between men and women, with women face a penalty of 5% per child in wages (Correll et al. Waldfogel 1997, 1998). When a woman becomes pregnant, her perceived commitment decreases (Harris 2009, Halpert, Wilson and Hickman 1993).

Nomaguchi (2009), in examining the changes in WFC over time, found several factors that increase WFC. Overall, from 1977-1997, parents felt more WFC while spending the same amount of time on childcare. She also found that increases in work hours, as well as education, increase WFC. However, older workers reported less WFC than younger. This is related to the findings of Stevens et. al (2007), that the younger the child, the more conflict produced for the mother. Further adding to the stress, economic restructuring has occurred, the results of which are longer work weeks and decreased real wages (Stevens et. al 2007). The breadwinner-homemaker family has given way to the dual-earner, finding more spouses juggling the demands of work and family.

Women working outside the home for pay have increased from 45% to 78% since the 1960s (Bianchi and Raley 2005). Since 1965, the hours women devote to housework have been cut in half, while the same time period has seen men's double (Bianchi et al. 2000, Bianchi 2006). Men do not exhibit a difference in the amount of housework they do whether they are employed or not, however the difference for women is dramatic. If a man works more hours, he does less housework, and normally holds more traditional gender role ideology (Bianchi et al. 2000). Women who are married tend to do more housework than unmarried women, where as there is little difference between married and unmarried men (Bianchi et al. 2000). When it comes to core household chores, cooking, cleaning, dishes, men do approximately a quarter

of the chores. Children increase housework for both men and women, but more so for women (Mattingly and Bianchi 2003, Bianchi et al., 2000). Bianchi et al. (2000) attribute women's decrease in housework hours to a decrease in cleaning standards. While women do twice as much housework as men, women do 3.6 times more childcare (Mattingly and Bianchi 2003, Bianchi et al. 2000). Increases in outside paid employment changed little of household responsibilities. Hochschild (1989) called this the "second shift." In her study, she found women did an extra month of work in a year as compared to men. In reexamining the second shift, Milkie, Raley and Bianchi (2009) found a decrease in the second shift for women of approximately a week and a half more per year than men. However, work in the home tends to be constructed along gendered lines with women responsible for core chores, where as men are responsible more flexible duties (Bianchi and Raley 2005; Milkie and Peltola 1999). Moreover, the largest percentage increase in men's work in the home is concentrated in more childcare involvement (Bianchi et al. 2006; Juster and Stafford 1985).

While the second shift of household labor is a big concern for working women, the United States, in recent decades, has seen a cultural shift in increasing of intensive parenting as a practiced ideology. At at the same time, more women have entered the workforce, and expectations of parenting has also increased (Hayes 1996). This is the cultural contradiction of mothering. The shift to the ideology of the sacred child leads mothers to devote large amounts of time and energy to providing for the well-being of their children. Complicating this is the societal norm of the ideal worker that women are expected to exhibited, leading to greater involvement for women in both family and work devotions. What has evolved from the ideology of intensive parenting is what Lareau (2003) classifies as concerted cultivation, a predominately middle class phenomenon. This is almost an obsessive compulsion on the part of the parents, mainly mothers, to work to construct environments that will cultivate a child's cultural and human capital for later life successes. Parents who practice intensive parenting highly schedulize children's days with extra-curricular activities meant to make them more well-rounded, productive individuals (Sayer 2006). Because of the two concepts, that of ideal worker, and concerted cultivation work and family conflicted is exacerbated for both parents, however mothers seem to suffer more. The diametrically opposed requirements of work devotion and family devotion create a time divide for women.

Much of the research on WFC focuses on individual choices and does not acknowledge that options may be structured by social institutions and cultural definitions (Blair Loy 2003). Furthermore, research has focused on work and family demands as being external to the actor, however there is a "deep seated, taken for granted powerfully compelling cultural schema that shapes constraints and people's interpretations of them" (Blair Loy 2003). Cultural schemas become institutionalized and internalized. The individual feels a powerful moral compulsion to present one's self as male or female. Schemas of devotion give one orientation in the allegiance of time, energy and passion, connecting one to something outside of themselves. WFC conflict becomes much larger than the individual making cost-benefit decisions. The schemas dictate a moral definition of what it is to be a good mother or a good worker.

Devotion schemas demand complete dedication, and the ideal worker is one who is unencumbered, fully committed and a man (Blair Loy 2003). his leads to the conflict between work and family. Blair Loy's (2003) research reveals three ways of handling competing devotions. There were the conformers who obeyed both schemas, the innovators who combined the two in some form, and the mavericks who challenged the system. These were the ones who found new ways of combining work and family. There was a distinct difference between cohorts, with the youngest cohort having "successfully transposed the egalitarian schema from the workplace onto their families' definitions of marriage and motherhood." Her study demonstrated that cultural schemas can constrain even the more affluent women in our society, proving how powerful they truly are. The two schemas, work and family, are seen as callings, becoming one's life. A woman can choose work devotion or family devotion, or she can become the maverick and forge a balance between the two. The career women in the study strove to justify their worth as a mother while acknowledging regret over the lack of time with their children.

Othering Women

What women say about other women tells a lot, as "talk is action" (Kleinman 2007,12). In "othering", the other is dehumanized and in turn, reinforces inequalities (Kleinman 2007). For women in particular, being one of the guys in a male-dominated work environment is important (Hayes 2009). However, in becoming one of the guys woman worker may feel a "raise in stature (Kleinman 2007, 13), however, she may be erasing females characteristics. The

phenomena of becoming one of the guys may involve cussing more or making disparaging comments about other women in an effort to distance the female worker from other women. This "othering" of women is divisive (Burns 1999) and feeds into the competition of masculine versus feminine between women. In particular, the discourse on sexual infidelity works to implicate the woman as predator and men as responding normally to a highly sexualized trope (Burns 1999). The discourse that the "other woman" is bad is simply an excuse for male infidelity and alienates women from each other.

This "othering" of women is reflective of power and the way women use discourse to wield this power. In this, women experience horizontal violence (Odermann Mougey 2004) with the wielding of power laterally working to reproduce their inequality to male counter-parts. While a woman is succeeding in her career, she garners the envy of other women, while at the same time feeling threatened by them rather than exercising collective action and empowerment (Beckwith 1999). Power between women functions within the structure of gendered power, power and power is associated with masculinity. Women's collusion against "others" fortifies her oppression (Beckwith 1999).

Privileging Male Jobs

In the civilian world, women who become mothers may have options of reducing work hours, moving to less demanding work, or leaving the job. These options are not available to military women (Sinclair 2004). Because the military requires unwavering commitment, women with families feel pulled in disparate directions, with career and social mothering incongruent (Blair-Loy 2003). Women in the military experience more conflict in the two loyalties because of the competing devotions of demanding work and families (Harris 2009; Sinclair 2004).

Williams (2001) defined the ideal worker as unencumbered and committed to long, arduous hours of work, with no outside limitations. As men and women make the choice to have children while pursuing a career, they face different repercussions for their choices. When becoming a father, men gain the appearance of warmth while keeping the perception of competence. Women gain in perceptions of warmth but lose in perceptions of competence (Harris 2009, Stevens et al., 2007). Further, the wage gap between mothers and non-mothers is greater than the wage gap between men and women, with women facing a penalty of 5% per child in wages (Correll et al., 2007; Waldfogel

1997, 1998). When a woman becomes pregnant, her employers perceive her commitment as decreased (Harris 2009; Halpert et al. 1993).

Women who are mothers are seen as less capable workers, whereas men are not (Correll et al. 2007; Harris 2009; Hodges and Budig 2010). In their study, Correll et al. (2007) found mothers perceived by employers as less competent and committed, deserving of less salary and leniency, as well as less upwardly mobile. Fathers, conversely, were perceived as more competent, committed, deserved larger salaries and leniency, and more upwardly mobile by employers. Aisenbrey et al. (2009) support these findings and add to them in a cross national study where they found that mothers in the United States suffered greater penalties for taking time out for children than women in Germany and Sweden.

The Second Shift

For women who do not choose to stay home, or do not have the resources to make the choice or choose a career path, the workday does not end with leaving the job. The concept of the "Second Shift", made famous by Arlie Hochschild (1989), has been built upon by many researchers. Sayer et al. (2005) defines the second shift as "time that employed women put into unpaid household work on top of their paid job." Men have increased their housework hours while women have decreased theirs, however, women continue to do more unpaid work and less paid work than men, creating a thirty-minute free time gap between the two (Sayer et al. 2004, Sayer et al. 2005, Mattingly and Bianchi 2003). Mattingly and Bianchi (2003) support and extend Sayer, finding that men have more pure free time, have more adult free time than women, and women's free time was more often "contaminated" by other responsibilities than men's free time. Mattingly and Bianchi (2003) found that one-third of the women in their study always felt rushed whereas one-fourth of men did.

Meaning of Mothering

Greedy Institutions

Institutions place demands on individuals for their time, energy and devotion. Segal (1986) drew on Coser (1974) in terming both the family and the military as greedy institutions. These institutions compete with each other for loyalty and commitment. "Greedy institutions are characterized by the fact that they exercise pressures on component individuals to weaken their ties, or not to

form any ties, with other institutions or persons that might make claims that conflict with their own demands" (Coser 1974). Segal (1986) found that the military assumes adaptation by the family; however, the family is becoming more of a greedy institution, especially for women. While many aspects of military demands are found in the civilian sector, Segal (1986) argues that it is unique in the constellation of demands placed on the soldier.

The demands placed on the soldier also affect the family, and in turn, the demands made by the family affect the job a soldier performs. MacDermid and Southwell (2010) found competing demands from the family and military for loyalty and commitment. Four factors influence the interplay of the work and family conflict, referred to in this paper as WFC, dynamic. First, military work demands frequent and long separations. Second, there is a great degree of exposure to danger. Third, heavy work demands create a situation where a soldier may be called to work at any time and must stay until the job is done, with no overtime pay. Finally, the spouse faces difficulty in obtaining and maintaining a career. Exacerbating the WFC in the military are the tight interconnections of personal and professional life, with high demands and low control for the worker (MacDermid and Southwell 2010, Kelley et al. 2008). Furthermore, research on WFC and family work conflict by Durand et al. (2003) found that soldiers experience high levels of WFC, but low levels of family work conflict. Female soldiers in particular feel they do not have enough time to meet all their obligations (Harris 2009).

Competing Devotions

Blair-Loy (2003) stated that much research on WFC focuses on individual choices and does not acknowledge that social institutions and cultural definitions may structure options. She further argues that research has focused on work and family demands as being external to the actor. There is a "deep seated, taken for granted powerfully compelling cultural schema that shapes constraints and people's interpretations of them (Blair-Loy 2003, 7). Cultural schemas become institutionalized and internalized. Schemas of devotion give one orientation in the allegiance of time, energy and passion, connecting one to something outside of themselves. WFC conflict becomes much larger than the individual making cost-benefit decisions. The schemas dictate a moral definition of what a good mother or a good worker is.

Devotion schemas demand complete dedication, and the ideal worker is one who is an unencumbered, fully committed man (Blair-Loy 2003). This leads to the conflict between work and family. Blair-Loy's (2003) research, she found three ways of handling competing devotions. The conformers obeyed schemas, the innovators who combined the two in some form, and the mavericks who challenged the system. The mavericks found new ways of combining work and family. A distinct difference arose between cohorts, with the youngest cohort having "successfully transposed the egalitarian schema from the workplace onto their families' definitions of marriage and motherhood" (Blair-Loy 2003, 183). Her study demonstrated that cultural schemas could constrain even affluent women in our society, proving how powerful they truly are. The two schemas, work and family, are seen as callings, becoming one's life. The professionals in the study strove to justify their worth as a mother while acknowledging regret over lack of time with their children.

Background/Context 1-2

For this study, I interviewed six women from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, five of whom were getting ready to deploy in August, 2011, for twelve months, while one would deploy in September. All six were mothers and soldiers. Fort Bragg is a major United States Army installation, in Cumberland, Harnett, Moore and Hoke counties, mostly in Fayetteville but also partly in the town of Spring Lake. Fort Bragg is a census-designated place in the 2010 census and had a population of 39,457 (US Census 2010). The fort is named for Confederate General Braxton Bragg. It covers over 251 square miles. It is home to the US Army Airborne Forces, Special Forces, US Army Forces Command and US Army Reserve Command. The women in the study were all from the same tenant battalion on Fort Bragg. The area of Fort Bragg where the unit is located on is the Combined Armed Services command, on the east edge of the post (Fort Bragg 2011). Interviews were conducted in a secured building where I had to wait to be escorted into the conference room. The conference room was also secured with a combination lock. Everyone working in this building has to have a security clearance, with some areas restricted to top secret clearance only. The women in this study all had the basic clearance. Five of the soldiers are enlisted, meaning their job does not require college, while one is a chief warrant officer, which is a more technical job, but again no college. All women were married with three being dual military, meaning that both spouses were in the army.

Women in the military exist in a hyper-masculine world with a warrior ethos of "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit and I will never leave a fallen comrade" (US Army 2011). Within the military there exists the Explosive Ordnance Disposal corps (EOD 2010) who's motto is "initial success or total failure." It is an even more segregated part of the military than the army as a whole. Within the army, women comprise over 15% of volunteers, however EOD has less than 4% (US Army 2011). It is within this environment that my interviews derived.

Data and Methods

Methods

Through a qualitative study of military women who are mothers, I examine decision-making processes mothers undergo while negotiating the competing devotions of work and family. Subjective experience and the women's individual life worlds are often not considered in research on juggling work and family (Loftland et al. 2006). The military and family are competing institutions (Segal 1986) and as such, women confront contradictory expectations of the roles they play.

I chose face-to-face interviews as the primary means of data collection because of the potentiality of the richness and depth of data (Lofland et al. 2006). Furthermore, face-to-face interviews are collaborative processes between researcher and interviewee, while also allowing for the collection of non-verbal data (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Interviews aid in discovering the complex interconnections in social relationships as well as the subjective side of the participants' experiences (Odermann Mougey 2004; Lofland et al. 2006). Moreover, where there is no ability to probe further an answer to a questionnaire, intensive interviewing allows for immediate follow-up on data collection for clarification (Lofland et al. 2006; Williams 1991). Intensive interviewing also facilitates analysis and coupled with other forms of fieldwork, such as participant observations, adds for validity checks and triangulation (Ragin et al. 2004). This was further developed by monitoring the participants' facebook pages to bring in more depth in the data analysis. I currently reside on Fort Bragg with my husband and two of our four children. Since we married in 1995, we have lived on military posts and Fort Bragg is very similar to most of the posts we have been to. Housing is segregated by rank and because of this, schools are also segregated by rank. The segregation is along two lines:

officer and enlisted as well as junior and senior of both. I am older than most people who reside on Fort Bragg as my husband has seventeen years of service, putting him near retirement before he turns thirty-nine.

For this study, I conducted six in-depth interviews between October 2010 and September 2011, along with entering the field for battalion events on four occasions: December 2010, June 2011, August 2011, and September 2011. These are "quasi-private" settings where I am a known researcher (Loftland et al. 2006). All soldiers are stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Also, I attended three social events that I immediately memoed about for future integration into the research (Emerson et al. 1995). Five of the interviews were conducted at the 192nd Ordnance Battalion, using various conference rooms reserved for family use. One interview took place at a restaurant in Fayetteville, North Carolina. A combination of convenience and theoretical sampling was used (Charmaz 2006), followed by snowball sampling. The first participant, Lisa, was known to me, and I did an in-depth interview with her [three hours]. I knew I wanted to interview women in the military, but it was through focused coding and Memoing that categories emerged (Elman 2005). These categories led to the theoretical sampling of mothers who are soldiers and are negotiating work and family conflict (Charmaz 2006). I used snowball sampling to obtain the names of other mothers in the military from Lisa. The interviews were recorded, and the duration was from 1 ½ -3 hours. After the session, I reflect on the experience to scrutinize my feelings and thoughts, trying to make this as reflexive as possible (Charmaz 2006). The participants were aware that additional interviews might be conducted for further probing as concepts emerged in my analysis (Charmaz 2005). This is the case in that I am corresponding with the deployed soldiers [six] during their year in Afghanistan to better understand mothering from afar.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and all participants were given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. Each interview began by asking the women basic demographic information on themselves and their families. Open-ended questions were used for the remainder of the interview, with questions on joining the military, challenges in balancing work and family, support networks, household chores, being female in the military, what it is to be a good soldier, and childcare concerns. Not all questions were asked of all participants because not all stories are the same.

Table 1. Basic demographic information of participants

Name	Lisa	Yvonne	Tammy	Sara	Kara	Chantelle
Age	34	37	33	26	22	22
Years in service	14	17	11	2	4	3
Rank	E6	CW2	E6	E4	E4	E4
MOS	88N	92A	42A	42A	42A	92Y
Marriage	Dual	Dual	Dual	Civilian	Civilian	Civilian
Race/ ethnicity	White	African American	White	Hispanic	White	African American
Children	3	1	3	2	1	1
#Marriages	2	2	2	1	1	1

For rank, E6 is considered senior, whereas CW2 and E4 are junior ranks. MOS is a military occupation specialty: 88N transportation coordinator, 92A supply, 42A human resources, 92Y supply. Marriages were categorized as either dual military, both spouses serving or the husband was not in the military.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data are analyzed in a reflexive manner, with emergent themes coming out and more analysis occurring over the concepts (Burroway 1998). Using a constructed grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006), my data forms the foundation for my theory with analysis generating concepts I construct. Through this process, I kept vigilant in my reflexivity (Burroway 1998) so that the data could inform my theory-building. I spent time reflecting on the data to be able to understand the participants' emotions, perceptions, experiences and attitudes (Burroway 1998).

The transcribed interviews were read repeatedly, and a general coding of themes emerged (Charmaz 2006). I then applied focused coding to refine and interpret links between key themes and categories identified in the open coding process (Charmaz 2006). I would follow these processes with free writing to try to focus my grasp on the data (Young 2004). Reliance on a review of the literature helped key themes that are universal in work and family conflict come to the forefront; however, another overarching theme, that of reproducing gender inequality, emerged. Initial analysis was directed at understanding each participant's experience of being a female

in the military, what that entails, and her unique circumstances that make up the work-family conflict. Further analysis looked at commonalities and differences between participants. The study involved decontextualizing data by breaking it into chunks with unique qualities (Charmaz 2006). Once this was done, patterns emerged around "sensitizing concepts" (Blumer 1969) such as reproducing gender inequality and what mothering meant to them. With primary themes identified, I returned to the interview transcripts to understand these two primary themes more deeply (Charmaz 2006). In re-producing gender I found the categories of othering and privileging of male jobs. In what mothering meant to my participants, categories time, guilt and the need to intensively parent, even from afar, emerged.

Findings

Reproducing Gender Inequality

Othering: Just one of the guys
A concept that became salient throughout all six interviews was that of being a good soldier and one of the guys. These women described other women in the military in derogatory terms, such as lazy, girlie, flirtatious, sluts, whores and incompetent. When referring to other women, they called them female soldiers, but when referring to men it was simply soldiers, as if the term soldier, when meaning competent, was masculine itself.

> Tammy: "I am a big team player and I can dish it out and I can take it. I'm one of the guys and more sensitive females don't stay around [the military] because they can't take it."

> Lisa: "I don't look at myself, especially as a private, as a male or female. I just feel like I am one of everybody. I guess just more one of the guys than a female…To be honest, I am cruder than the guys, I cuss more and I love to make the blush."

> Kara: "I don't think people know how to take me, because I am at work, it's all work, I don't come to work to find a man, I have one. But there are females that do, and they don't care whose man he is."

While repeatedly reading these women's words, and reflecting on my own feelings about them, what they had to say, and how they said it, a sub-concept of othering emerged: horizontal violence. Horizontal violence is hostile and aggressive behavior by individual or groups members towards another

member or groups of members of the larger groups (Odermann Mougey 2004). All six women, in a negative context, spoke of the term Queen for a Year. Queen for a year is the term used by these women and others in the military to describe a woman's tour to a remote duty station, such as Korea, Afghanistan, or Iraq. She is "queen for a year" because there are so few females that the males vie for her attention. Again, all the women in my study reported never having participated in queen for a year, however knew many women who had. While queen for a year is premised on the inflated value of these women, it is catering to the male gaze. A queen's value is derived from men's desire. She has no control over her own personal value; she is only as valuable as the men who desire her sexually deem her to be. Where the queen could be taken as an empowering experience for these women, owning their sexuality, commanding their audience, more often than not these women leave Iraq, Afghanistan or Korea with a reputation that plagues their military career. The men, however, do not experience this phenomenon.

> Yvonne: "Yeah, I've seen it [queen for a year]. But I'm like, I don't know what you are doing that for cuz it will only carry you so far. You're being used and it just follows you back to your life in the real world."

> Lisa: "Females get away with a little more stuff by batting their eyes. I try not to fall into that stereotype, but a lot of them do. Like the female private my husband was TDY [temporary divorce for a year]. She thought she was special, but it was just sex. He and I, we have something, she was just a piece."

These women are quick to point out that they do not participate in "queen for a year," however, they point to multiple examples of other women who are most willing to allow themselves to be exploited in this way. In doing so, my participants are contributing to the marginalization of women and their own oppression (Beckwith 1999.

Privileging of male jobs: Good Soldiering
The military requires these women to be good soldiers first and foremost and places strict requirements on how gender is done. Women must either have short hair or wear it up, and make-up is to be kept to a minimum. The only difference between men's and women's uniforms is during pregnancy, when a woman is authorized to wear sneakers in her last trimester. These women articulated that good soldiers are strong, put the mission first, and are male.

> Tammy: "Well, he's [spouse] gone a lot more than me. I mean, he has been deployed four times and me, only once. But I'm a pac clerk [human resource management] and he's a truck driver, so his job, you know, he's in harm's way and stuff. It's a lot more stressful."

> Lisa: "My chain of command is like 'why can't your spouse do it?' [when children are ill and need to go to the doctor] And I'm like really? His job is a little more important than mine. I mean, I am transportation and he is SF [special forces], he's the bad ass, not me."

As Lisa, Tammy and Yvonne, all dual military families, describe their relationships, they privilege what their husbands do in the military over their own careers. With the military ethos of "mission first" they have internalized the ideology that those that support the mission are inferior to those that execute the mission. In Lisa's description of her husband as "bad ass," Tammy's husband being important because he drives on dangerous roads in war zones, or Yvonne's assessment that because her husband is in charge of troops while she is in only in charge of millions of dollars, the culture of violence, of which the military is so permeated by, comes through. he mission, war, is more important than the support of human beings. This ethos serves to denigrate those in positions of support, primarily women, and the participants in my research reaffirm this denigration, thus contributing to the reproduction of gender inequality.

The Meaning of Mothering

Not Enough Time

All the women in the study complained about not having enough time for family, let alone themselves. While the younger cohort was quicker to separate home and work, counting off time as family time, the older cohort told stories of late nights and weekends when their personal time was interrupted by work disruptions. In discussing the balancing of these two greedy institutions, family and the military, a pattern emerged between the two cohorts. Sayer et al. (2005) found, and Yvonne's words demonstrate, that these career soldiers repeatedly express the burden of the second shift.

> Yvonne: "Sometimes when I get off work, I'm starting the second job cuz I've got to jet home and get her [daughter] and get ready for the next day."

The women of the older cohort repeatedly told stories of workdays that did not end when they left work. When asked about housework, Tammy

reported that she and her spouse split housework 50-50; however, the evidence demonstrates something else.

> Tammy: "You would think I am a stay-at-home with some of the ideas he has. Like I should have dinner ready for him when he comes home and I should have the house cleaned up, laundry done and put away as well. That's not reality, because I get home maybe an hour before him if I am lucky."

Further, all three women in the older cohort stated that childcare and sick children were their sole responsibility. Yvonne and Lisa both had experienced some time in the military as single mothers, and both felt that the challenges of single parenting were, at times, easier than juggling two military careers. All three women with military spouses stated that it was their job to ensure everyone's schedules lined up regarding deployments, training, etc. While these women described themselves as good soldiers, meaning one of the guys, the sense of equality at home was sorely lacking. The participants' responsibility for domesticity, coupled with their privileging their spouses' careers over theirs, serves to reinforce the normative aspects of gender inequality found in the military.

> Lisa: *"Dual military (in some ways) is worse than being a single parent, because I have to worry about my schedule for deployments and stuff and now I have to worry about his…. His chain of command feels that doctors' appointments and stuff are a woman's job because his job is more important than mine, [as part of special forces] and sorry, I am the mom, so I am gonna make sure my kids are ok."*

The culture of the last male bastion in the military, Special Forces, expects, as Lisa told, a stay-at-home wife-breadwinner husband model of the family. They are not equipped to deal with models that challenge this assumption. All three women in the older cohort expressed that household chores and childcare were predominately their responsibilities. Core housework duties were done by these women and the jobs their spouses performed fell into a highly gendered specific category, such as taking out the trash, yard work, or fixing things when they needed to be fixed. When Lisa spoke of other wives in her husband's unit, she generalized them as stay-at-home mothers who looked like beauty queens.

> Lisa: "Not only are most of the guys' wives stay-at home-moms, they all look like beauty queens. Well, some of them do, really, but if you look, some of them look so fake, you're like really? Where did you get all that collagen?"

She is denigrating stay-at-home moms, all the while espousing the "super mom" mentality that she can give her all to both work and home. Lisa is distancing herself from these women, in an attempt to create a narrative of herself as a good soldier [male]. In contrast to the older cohort, and following what Nomaguchi (2009) found in the study of change in work family conflict, the younger cohort took a more egalitarian approach. The younger cohort has worked out more equal arrangements of childcare and housework.

> Chantelle: "Since he works part-time, he does the majority of the cleaning and cooking. If he doesn't do it, we generally share, like doing the laundry, or grocery shopping."

Kara and Sara, both with stay-at-home spouses, clearly stated that they had no household responsibilities. Their spouses made sure that their off time was reserved for family time rather than maintenance. Both women affirmed that time at home was time they spent enjoying their children and spouses. Their spouses respected the long hard workdays they put in and wanted them to have time to relax with the children. Kara's statement speaks for both she and Sara:

> "When I go home I don't have to do anything, he does the cooking, cleaning so I don't have to do anything around the house."

While the care of sick children fell squarely on the shoulders of the women in the older cohort, this new cohort relied on their spouses for all but the most serious of conditions. All of the women deployed in August or September of this year and when asked about childcare arrangements both Kara and Chantelle stated that they would be relying on their mothers to provide supervision of their spouses caring for the children. Both families will move back home to be near the mother's mother during her absence. Sara was the only one who felt her husband was competent enough to manage alone for the year she would be gone; however, this was not her first deployment, and her children were older than the others. The older cohort, being dual military families, made arrangements for their children to go to relatives, as spouses would be deployed around the same time or were unavailable to take on the role of single parent. However, when the situation is reversed, there is no discussion as to who will take care of the children. It is expected that Lisa, Tammy, and Yvonne will continue to be the primary parents in the absence of their husbands. These women, while having careers in a traditionally male field, are reproducing the gendered norms and stereotypes that foster inequality.

Too Much Guilt

The soldiers in this study represent a slice of women in the army. Collectively they have fourteen deployments for a total time away from family of 12 years in deployments alone. This does not take into consider the frequent absences for training. Guilt was a theme that emerged in the data. Missed birthdays and milestones were scattered throughout our talks. While Chantelle, Sara and Kara have supportive spouses at home, all three of them voiced the same thing underlying desire:

> Sara: "Sometimes I wish I could be the one at home."

> Kara: "Yeah, I am jealous of him" [spouse]. "He doesn't miss anything."

> Chantelle: "Yeah, I don't want my baby loving her daddy more than me."

Tammy, whose six-year-old son is special needs, expressed the most poignant guilt. During her last deployment, he developed oppositional defiance disorder and depression. He suffers night terrors, and her biggest concern was that she got him stable before she deployed in September for another year because her husband deployed before her. It is her job to ensure the stability of her son, as her husband's primary focus is mission readiness. Here again, is the primacy of the male career and the dominance of gendered caregiving expectations.

> Tammy: "Telling my kids goodbye is horrible. [Her middle child] He doesn't want to go to school, because he is afraid I will leave. It rips my heart out."

But even in discussing this, she notes that who she feels really sorry for are his care givers.

> Tammy: "It's gonna be hard for me, but it's gonna be harder on the people taking care of him. He's in an LD [learning disabled] class and his teacher, she's real sensitive, and it rips her heart out and cries along with him and it breaks her heart that she can't make it go away."

Even as she acknowledges that it will be difficult for her, Tammy seems to be "othering" her son's teacher as feminine, sensitive, weak, not like the soldier Tammy is. She has guilt over leaving, but she is tough and can handle it. Furthermore, Tammy reaffirms the notion that she is doing mothering correctly by attending to her children's needs with countless doctors, psychiatrists, and counseling appointments.

Intensely Mothering

Deployed female soldiers work very hard to keep in contact with their children. Their experiences differ due to their commands' rules. Some

mothers were limited to one ten-fifteen minute call a week, while others talked to their children twice a day. Two of the mothers bought cell phones for their preschoolers to have with them at all times so that when they could call the children they would get the call. Mothers of older children had given them phones well before deployments, so as to be able to be connected constantly. Much like Blair Loy (2003) found in her work-devoted mothers, the mothers in my sample worked to construct narratives that justified their worth as mothers while being deeply dedicated to their careers. While Lisa admits she limits her children's extracurricular activities she also is very proud of how she stays in touch with them when she is gone.

> Lisa: *"I talk to the kids all the time, even when I don't have internet, I guarantee that all my kids will get cards from me and a letter from me every day. Plus they will get emails from me, even when I am not there they are still my priority."*

All the women in the study expressed justification of their good mothering. Sara, who was deployed when her daughters were three and one, missed many milestones.

> Sara: "My youngest daughter started walking while I was away, and started talking. I was afraid she wouldn't know me when I came home. But I made recordings of me reading to her and videos of me playing with her. And when I got home I took thirty days leave and just spent it with the girls, spoiling them."

While duty pulls these mothers away from their children quite frequently, they strive to make a congruent picture of good mothering and how it applies to them. All six women, when asked about joining the military, conveyed that they wanted to be part of something bigger, something important. Three of the women had grown up with fathers in the military and were intimately acquainted with the culture and could not picture themselves doing anything else. Five of the women felt called to the military as a higher purpose, while the remaining one looked at the military as a way out of a "bad neighborhood" and into a better life. It is this justification of the military being a higher purpose, as something other than just working, that aids these women in my study in constructing a coherent narrative of being good mothers while working intensely demanding jobs. This discourse also furthers the distinction of "othering" women in that the participants, being called for a higher purpose, buffer themselves from some for the guilt working mothers deal with.

Yvonne, the oldest soldier in the study, indicated she delayed having a child to focus on her career. She originally entered the military as an enlisted soldier, however, she soon decided this was a career for her and sought additional, technical training to become a warrant officer. She has one child and affirms this was by design.

> Yvonne: "Most people, when they be parents, it is more than one kid. And quite honestly, I don't know how they do it. It is hard enough to have one child and fulfill the mission. The army takes everything you got."

While the rest of the women were in their teens or very early twenties when they had their first child, Yvonne was in her early thirties and well into her military career. She made this conscious decision to establish herself in her career before she undertook parenting. Her dedication to the army is apparent in her attitude toward being separated from her young daughter so much. Since the child's birth she has been deployed to combat zones twice and has done a year tour in Korea, while her child stayed with either her father or Yvette's mother. While she misses her daughter when they are not together, she looks at the separations as part of the job, something she knew full well when she became a mother post 9/11.

The older cohort has experienced the most change in military policy regarding families. Soldiers were expected to be soldiers first and a family was not to interfere. Family interference in soldiering indicated either a lack of commitment to the military, or the inability of a soldier to handle her life competently.

> Lisa: "To be honest with you, I always put the army first. It is army, army, army and I don't let the kids do certain extra-curricular activities because I don't have time to run them here or there…I'm the first one at work and usually stay until seven or eight, sometimes later."

Here Lisa conveys her complete dedication to the military in her extraordinarily long hours and the restriction on her children's participation in activities. However, she later contradicts herself when the topic is directly focused on parenting.

> Lisa: "I have the girls in cheer and dance and peanut plays football, baseball and soccer."

Tammy, eleven years in to her army career, is enthusiastic about her job and got very excited when she talked about her initial enlistment.

> Tammy: "When I signed on the dotted line and was sworn in I wanted to sign for twenty right then and there, I wanted it to be my life. I'm from a military life and I knew this was for me, it was a way of life, it's in the blood, and it's an honor."

In expressing her desire to do twenty, meaning the twenty years a soldier must serve in order to retire, Tammy communicated that from the very beginning of her career, she was committed to the army. For Tammy, the military is a calling, something bigger than herself and that to which she is devoted. She, too, puts in long hours and restricts her children's participation in extracurricular activities so that they do not infringe on her service. As Tammy expressed, the military is a way of life with its own culture and norms. These women have internalized those norms of "good soldiering" the institution has scripted for them. They devote themselves to this way of life. The younger cohort is made up of dedicated soldiers, and all have voiced their commitment during work hours. However, these women were much less likely to report exceptionally long hours or off-time interruptions.

> Sara: "When I am at work, I put my family in the back of my head, but when I am home, I don't let myself think about work."

Sara, twenty-six, echoes what the other two women in the younger cohort also expressed. A clear line of demarcation exists between work and family.

Discussion and Conclusion

Much as Blair-Loy (2003) found mavericks in her study, the younger cohort consists of the innovators of my study. They defy the military's ethos of complete dedication and sacrifice in order to have the career they want and a family as well. To be fair to the women in this study, the younger cohort has experienced a slightly different military policy toward families than the older. They entered at a time when the military, fighting two wars, needed to retain people in great numbers. Because of this, the old adage of 'if the military wanted you to have a family they would have issued you one,' has been replaced with an army that is trying to accommodate families as a way to keep soldiers.

Like all women who juggle work and family, these women strive to achieve balance. As Nomaguchi (2009) found, it was more common for the newer cohort to report that they clearly differentiate work time and home time, not allowing work to creep in on family time as much as the older cohort. However, all women in my study do work extremely long hours and have to

leave their families for a year at a time, making their jobs especially demanding of time. In looking at these particular women, theories of work and family conflict have been extended to start the conversation on a unique group of workers who, until now, have been ignored. Furthermore, the ongoing study of mothering from afar may further the discussion on the cultural constraints of mothering.

The idea of reproducing gender inequality is not new, however, listening to the lived experiences of these women in this study, it is hard not to see how the "othering" of the generic female soldier is only a form of taking part in one's own oppression. They at once espouse the ethos of the male soldier while at the same time demeaning the contribution women make to the army. The social expectation of the ideal worker being unencumbered, committed to long arduous hours of work, and having no outside limitation (Williams 2001) is the embodiment of the good soldier and what these women strive for. However, they have the competing social expectation of good mothering to negotiate while trying to "soldier like a man" [Tammy]. How they construct their narratives adds to the literature on how women negotiate work and family conflict while doing gender in a hyper-masculine environment. The military is a violent culture and these women are part of it, but they are also deeply embedded in their families, which is contradictory to the violence of the military.

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